

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 1



Key Paragraph, p. 3

“Some nights she is afraid her father will never come home. That he will never walk through that door, take off his hat and his badge, unfasten his holster and place it beside everything else on the table in the mud room. She reads the papers. She knows that cops get killed all the time. Even at her school she’s heard kids say they hate cops” (p. 3).

Writing Prompt

It is normal to be afraid, especially of something, which you have no control over. However, it is important not to let fear rule your life. **In a short product, make an argument for why the narrator should not let herself be overcome by fear. Give some suggestions for how she can lessen her fear, using examples from the novel or from your own life. Make sure to cite your sources appropriately.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 2



Key Paragraph, p. 9

“There is a song that goes *All that you have is your soul*...It is true. When it comes down to it, every single other thing can be taken clean away from you. Or you can be taken clean away from it” (p. 9).

Writing Prompt

As Toswiah is experiencing, the only thing that cannot be taken away from you is your soul. **In one to two paragraphs, make an argument for why this is important to remember in your daily life. How would believing in this concept change your view of the world, your goals, and your values? Include examples from your own life or from the novel to support your argument.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 3



Key Paragraph, p. 24

“They don’t know I hear them talking late at night when they think me and Cameron are asleep. Daddy says Mr. Dennis and Mr. Randall killed that boy. He wants to be a witness to it—break the Blue Wall of Silence” (p. 24).

Writing Prompt

By breaking the Blue Wall of Silence, Evie’s father is risking his life and the safety of his family to tell the truth. This is a hard decision to make, especially when there is so much at stake. **In a short product, make an argument for why Evie’s father should risk his life to tell the truth and get justice for the boy who was shot. Include evidence from the book or examples from your own life to support your arguments.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 4



Key Paragraph, p. 36

"My father said, 'What would I do, T?' I shrugged, and stared down at my hands.

'What's the right thing, Daddy?'

'Exactly,' he said, frowning into the darkness. He sighed and kissed my head.

'Both choices seem so damn wrong" (p. 36).

Writing Prompt

Evie's father has a very difficult choice to make. Think about a time when you had to choose between doing what was easier and doing what was right. What steps did you take to decide what to do? **In a short product, make an argument for how Evie's father should go about choosing what to do. Be sure to include examples from your own life or from the novel to support your argument.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 5



Key Paragraph, p. 49

"It is about race. If Raymond Taylor was white, I don't think he'd be dead now" (p. 49).

Writing Prompt

Though we have come a long way since the days of slavery and civil rights movements, racism still exists in America. How big of a role do you think race played in the shooting of Raymond Taylor? **In one to two paragraphs, make an argument for how big of a factor race was in Raymond Taylor's shooting. Use evidence from the book and examples from your own life to support your answer.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 6



Key Paragraph, p. 54

"Glass covered the kitchen table and floor. The bullet holes were like small black caves against the white kitchen wall. I stared at them without blinking. I was not afraid. Some part of us that had been the same way forever was gone...I thought *this part of my life is over now*" (p. 54).

Writing Prompt

Now that Mr. Greene has made his decision about how to handle the situation, everything has changed for Evie and her family. Sometimes changes like these can be positive, and other times, these changes can be difficult for everyone involved. **In a short product, make an argument for why this will be a positive change for Evie and her family. How can you convince her to look on the bright side and try to find things to look forward to?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 7



Key Paragraph, p. 62

“When I closed my eyes, I wasn’t in the van anymore. I was back at our house, waving good-bye to these strangers. Holding my father’s hand” (p. 62).

Writing Prompt

Evie wishes that things didn’t have to change. She doesn’t want her family to move with some strangers to a new place where she doesn’t know anyone. She doesn’t want to leave her home or her friends or her life. Unfortunately, she has to. Would it be easier for her to try to forget about her past and start fresh, or hold onto the things that she loves? **Write a short product, making an argument for whether Evie should let go of her past, or hold on to what she loves. Make sure to include evidence for whatever path you choose to recommend.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 8



Key Paragraph, p. 66-67

"I didn't tell her that Lulu and I had made promises. We'd go to the same college. We'd room together...And Grandma. She'd be there, too. She'd promised. She was going to make a coconut cake for me. There'd be one candle on it—marking the first day of the rest of my life" (p. 66-67).

Writing Prompt

Experts often tell people that the role of *hope* in a person's life is very important. It can keep them going under severe circumstances. **In a short product, make an argument for why Evie needs to stay hopeful, despite her circumstances. Include suggestions for how to do this, and evidence for how hope helps people like her.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 9



Key Paragraph, p. 82

“Don’t even go there, Tamara. You know she’s a Joho, and Johos can’t fight anybody. It’s against their religion” (p. 82).

Writing Prompt

Many religions practice nonviolence. **In a short product, make an argument for why practicing nonviolence is just in most situations. Include evidence to support your answer.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 10



Key Paragraph, p. 86

"I knew by the next morning she would be the cootie-girl, and even as I kept hearing the awful, gulping sound Carla made as she cried, I couldn't help feeling relieved that it was her and not me" (p. 86).

Writing Prompt

Humans have an emotional need called belongingness, which is the desire to be accepted into a group. Feeling as though you are a part of something greater than yourself is very important for happiness. One of the ways people form groups is by excluding others. **In a short product, make an argument for what Evie should do about her situation: she needs to belong to a group to be happy, but can only do so by unjustly excluding Carla. Use evidence to support your answer.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 11



Key Paragraph, p. 97

“He turns slowly and glares at my mother. ‘Do you know what that felt like? It felt like sending myself to jail’” (p. 97).

Writing Prompt

Evie’s father had close bonds with his police officer friends. They were like brothers but two of them did something terribly wrong. It takes a great deal of courage to stand and speak out against people who are close to you. **Write a short product arguing for why and how Evie’s father’s actions are courageous and brave. How do you know?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 12



Key Paragraph, p. 107

“No. I mean really retarded. Only everybody calls it ‘developmentally disabled.’ Only that’s too long to say. She’s seventeen.’ I don’t know what to say, so I don’t say anything. We stare out at the schoolyard without saying anything” (p. 107).

Writing Prompt

It is a very intimate thing to tell someone you have a developmentally disabled sister. Do you think Toswiah is trying to become friends with Evie? **In a short product, write an argument for whether or not Toswiah is showing signs of ‘justice requires restraint’ by respecting the rights of all. Use evidence to support your argument.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 13



Key Paragraph, p. 117

“Mama shook her head. ‘The Lord works in mysterious ways. He has His plans and it’s not for us to understand. There’s a reason why we’re here. We just don’t know it yet’” (p. 117).

Writing Prompt

Mama has started believing this statement more firmly since she changed her religion after the move. **In a paragraph, write a product arguing whether or not you agree with Mama that there is a reason for your existence. Use examples or evidence to support your answer.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 14



Key Paragraph, p. 125

“My mother thinks I am getting tutored in science, because she wouldn’t approve of track. Not now. Not as a Witness. Her motto is Academics and the Bible” (p. 125).

Writing Prompt

Evie feels like she finally belongs when she joins the track team. However, she feels that she has to lie to her mother about what she is really doing, instead of talking to her mother and trying to convince her of track’s importance. **In a short product, write a strong argument that Evie could use to convince her mother to let her run track. Make sure to support your reasons!**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 15



Key Paragraph, p. 133

“After practice yesterday, a few girls came over to me and slapped my hand, welcoming me. *Daddy longlegs*, Mira said when she waved goodbye. *Spider woman*. Later, *Spider*, someone said...Spider. I liked that” (p. 133).

Writing Prompt

Nicknames can be either positive or negative, depending on who chooses them. Sometimes they can make the person feel more included, and other times they can be used as tools of bullying. **In a short product, make an argument for whether or not nicknames are good. Do they hurt or help? Use examples or evidence to support your claims.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 16



Key Paragraph, p. 146

“‘It’s mine!’ I said, not caring that I sounded like a four-year-old. ‘Track’s mine. And you and Mama and Daddy aren’t gonna take it away from me. Nobody’s gonna take it away from me’” (p. 146).

“All I’m saying is, Mama and Daddy aren’t gonna get us out of this one. We’re in it together and we got to do it ourselves. You’ll run. I’ll go to Simon Rock. Nobody’s gonna stop either of us” (p. 146).

Writing Prompt

Both track and university life offer Evie and Anna freedom. They have something to take their minds off their troubles and something to look forward to. **In a short product, argue why it is important for the girls to look for the future to help them through the present time. Use examples and evidence to support your argument.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 17



Key Paragraph, p. 156

“My body was fluid. My stride was flawless. In my head, I saw myself in slow motion, running against the cold wind blowing up all around me. Running *hard* against it, into it, through it. And winning. I, Evie/Toswiah Thomas/Green...was winning” (p. 156).

Writing Prompt

Sometimes the best way to face a problem is to attack it head on. The paragraph above is a metaphor for Evie’s new approach to her life and difficulties. **In a short product make an argument for why this approach will work for her, or why it won’t. Use evidence from the novel to support your answer.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 18



Key Paragraph, p. 165

“Some days I wish Lulu and I had had a huge fight and screamed our hatred at each other. That by the time I left, our friendship had been bruised beyond repair. Then the missing wouldn’t hurt so. The holding on wouldn’t be so deep” (p. 165).

Writing Prompt

Sometimes it is easier to let go of things when it feels like there is a reason to. Evie is struggling to let go of her friendship with Lulu because it feels like there was no reason for them to end their friendship. **In a short product, argue why even though it is more difficult for Evie now, it will be better in the long run that her and Lulu’s friendship was not damaged before she left. Convince Evie to focus on the future.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 19



Key Paragraph, p. 171

"I press my hand to my chest. Seven months have passed since we left Denver in the middle of the night. My heart is still beating. I am no longer who I was in Denver, but at least and at most—I am" (p. 171).

Writing Prompt

While most people like to believe that they do not change, and that their thoughts, opinions and beliefs are the same at their core no matter what, this is not true – people change frequently, and this is a very good thing. Change is a sign of growth and maturity. **In a short product, make an argument to Evie why it is a good thing that she has changed since she has moved.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

HUSH, Day 20



Key Paragraph, p. 180

“Me and Daddy stare at each other for a long time—two, old, old buddies who knew each other when” (p. 180).

Writing Prompt

Sharing secrets can unite people, or it can tear them apart. **In a short product, make an argument for whether the sharing of secrets is a good thing or a bad thing.**